NEWSLETTER OF THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

EduBrief

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

Dynamic knowledge-making for 21st century education

Short Learning Programme: Managing and Leading with Digital Technologies

Ms Lilian Barnard, Public Sector Director, Microsoft South Africa; Dr Yulia Krieger, Deputy Representative UNICEF South Africa; Mrs Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education; Dr Andrew Barendse, Managing Executive, Regulatory Affairs, Vodacom; Prof Sarah Gravett, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg.

This continuing professional development course in the form of a university-accredited Short Learning Programme (SLP) was offered by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and supported by the partnership between **UJ, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), UNICEF, Vodacom and Microsoft** in a blended mode of delivery. The rationale for designing and delivering a relevant university-accredited short course is located within the context of their collective efforts over the past two years to grow the 21st century competencies of education officials.

The Learning Technologies Unit (LTU) of the Science and Technology Education Department (SciTechEd) in the Faculty of Education at UJ was responsible for the conceptualisation, design and delivery of this SLP. This SLP is credit bearing to a *Postgraduate Diploma in Education: Science and Technology Education* with the endorsement *ICT Innovation in Education*. The 2016 launch of

this SLP was an auspicious affair, which was attended by CEO's and country directors from all the partner organisations and the Minister of Basic Education. During the ceremony, each of the partner organisations affirmed their commitment and support to the education sector. They made specific mention of the critical role of ICT's in advancing teaching and learning and with a focus on teacher professional development.

The initial opening event and three-day face-to-face contact sessions were followed by an eight-month online participation period. During the opening ceremony the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, called for a 100% completion rate and affirmed her support to all participants. A year later we came together to celebrate the achievements of the successful candidates during a gala dinner and graduation event on 26 July 2017.

Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga

Prof Sarah Gravett, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg.

Dr Yulia Krieger, UNICEF, Deputy Representative, South Africa.

Dr Andrew Barendse, Managing Executive, Regulatory Affairs, Vodacom.

Ms Lillian Barnard, Public Sector Director, Microsoft.

A total of 166 participants enrolled to learn how to harness the potential of digital technologies in support of their management and leadership roles effectively. This included 115 teacher centre managers and 51 eLearning specialists. These Teacher Centre Managers and eLearning specialists are embedded within each district in South Africa and have a mandate to capacitate the professional development of teachers in providing appropriate and contextual in-service training opportunities and to implement the DBE's Action Plan to 2019 in a response to the priorities, targets and programmes articulated in the National Development Plan, 2030.

The practical ICT skills they acquired during this course and associated deepening of their theoretical understanding will allow them to identify and address various tensions in their own ICT work-activity systems. They will also be equipped to establish and maintain vibrant subject-specific Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in their districts. These DBE mandated PLC for teachers supported and mediated with various ICT tools and services that will further build capacity in each school. Furthermore, they learned to expand their own pedagogical repertoire modelling appropriate and subject-specific ICT use in the various teachers training instances they are required to host in their districts.

Top achievers with Minister Motshekga and representatives from our valued partners share a moment.

CAPS Radio live interview with Dr Jacqueline Batchelor.

We achieved a stunning 93,3% throughput rate with 155 successfully completing the programme in the blended mode of delivery and a first for South Africa.

The gala dinner and graduation ceremony were a very joyous occasion, where both provincial and individual achievements were recognised. Each province was called to the front where their achievements were listed and recognised by the Minister. The evening culminated in the announcement of the top achievers where they each received prizes from the partners. The top four achievers each received a laptop from Microsoft, and the remaining top achievers each received a tablet from Vodacom.

The gala dinner and graduation were broadcasted live on CAPS Radio with the radio host interviewing a number of graduates and course facilitators to get their view on the value of ICT in Education and particularly on what has been happening in the various provinces to advance learning with technologies in our schools.

An important feature of the SLP, was the inclusion of tutors who were students in their final year of their Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and senior tutors from the ICT Honours and Master's degree group. They provided learning support, and technical and moral support for all the participants. The tutors made tremendous effort to assist participants to remain on task and adhere to given timelines, and contributed greatly to the overall success of the programme. Because of the blended mode of delivery and the geographically isolation of students, a favourable ratio of 1:10 tutors to participants ensured the successful delivery of the programme. The valuable contribution of the tutors was recognised during the evening and the top tutor, Thulani Mthembu, received a prize for his sterling work.

A dedicated team of ICT school support role students was very active during the conference, gala dinner and graduation ceremony and worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of events. They interacted with the participants and offered continued support throughout the two-day programme. Their professionalism and expertise were put to good use and they exemplified the calibre of student that UJ is delivering to the education system.

Mr Thulani Mthembu (UJ ICT master's student and senior tutor) received the Top Tutor award in the SLP from Mrs Angie Motshekga.

Dr Jacqueline Batchelor with the team of ICT school support role students.

The Minister of Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, and our ICT School support role students.

Learning Technologies Unit Mini-Conference – COPs: Growing stronger together with digital technologies (26 - 27 July 2017 at the Garden Court Milpark)

Celebrating the successful conclusion of the short learning programme, "Managing and Leading with Digital technologies", we were pleased to invite 159 successful candidates from all nine provinces to represent their districts at this event. The conference theme was conceptualised to exploit the new COPs that have spontaneously developed in various provinces during the SLP. These COPs originated in the district ICT centres and have been strengthened by the participation of eLearning specialists and departmental officials who have become the natural champions that have emerged during this programme. Three tracks were offered in two sessions of 20 minutes each allowing for 10 minutes of questions. Topics included: Educational platforms; Practical applications; Contextual issues; Continuous Teacher Professional Development (CPTD); Communities of Practice (COPs) and Leading and Managing with ICT. Each session was chaired by a provincial representative and resulted in lively discussions. The best presentations received a tablet sponsored by Vodacom as a prize.

Speakers at the conference included SLP participants who were recognised by their peers and others who were invited by the course facilitators based on meaningful participation in learning activities and the insights that they had to offer. Nancy Masha and Mpho Mongake from the ICT support role methodology cohort, who acted as tutors during the course, were also invited to act as speakers at the event to share their insights. The conference continued the next day with plenary discussions focusing on the way forward in growing the Teacher Centre COP. Ra'ees Khan, one of our ICT tutors, delivered a stirring motivational talk on how to be an ICT champion during the plenary session.

Learning Technologies team: Dr Rabaitse Diseko, Prof Geoff Lautenbach and Dr Jacqueline Batchelor at the start of the conference.

Conference participants before their sessions.

Ms Daleen Felkers (Eastern Cape Province) presenting.

Mr Ntsikelelo Cakata from the Eastern Cape receiving his delegation pack from the ICT tutors.

Our ICT tutors Mpho Mongake and Nancy Masha sharing their experiences of being a tutor in this course.

Ra'ees Khan and Pat Motsweneng (GDE).

Dr Bjoern Hassler (UoC), Dr Jacqueline Batchelor (UJ), Dr Sara Hennesey (UoC) and Dr Sonia Ilie (UoC).

Capacity Building Mixed Methods workshop. Collaboration with the University of Cambridge and Cambridge-Africa Alborada Research Fund.

This fund was established in 2012 with a generous £1 million donation from the Alborada Trust, UK to the Cambridge-Africa programme. The Fund enables principal investigators at the University of Cambridge, across all disciplines, to apply (jointly with a partner at a sub-Saharan African university or research institution) for grants to initiate and/or strengthen research collaborations. Funds are awarded for research costs such as reagents, fieldwork and equipment.

Dr Sara Hennesey (Reader in Teacher Development and Pedagogical Innovation, and Deputy Director of Research, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge), Dr Bjoern Hassler (Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education and Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge) and Dr Jacqueline Batchelor (Senior Lecturer in the Learning Technologies Unit, Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg,) successfully applied to the Alborada fund for £5 000 to host a capacity-building mixed methods workshop at UJ.

A two-day workshop on mixed methods (MM) was run in March 2017 at the University of Johannesburg by Dr Sara Hennessy, Dr Sonia Ilie, Dr Bjoern Hassler and Dr Jacqueline Batchelor. Interest significantly exceeded expectation, and included staff and graduate students across seven higher education institutions (University of Johannesburg, University of Cambridge, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Pretoria, University of South Africa, Sedibeng TVET College,

Independent Institute of Education), as well as staff from NGOs and impressively, three members of the research team at the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Participants were affiliated with various academic departments, including a range of education departments (mathematics, science, technology, ICT, learning technologies) and psychology.

The workshop included a mix of presentations and hands-on activity, including participants' own (individual and collaborative) development of mixed methods research designs. We conducted light pre-/post-workshop surveys, as well as a mid-workshop "post-it" feedback activity. Attendees' expectations prior to the workshop were in line with our own and included general information on MM, types of MM designs, MM for programme evaluation, data collection, analysis, and practical issues when conducting MM research. Other expectations included opportunities for finding out more about research conducted by colleagues at the same or other institutions, with a view to initiating research collaboration. About 70% of the participants had a concrete project in mind for which MM could be applied. While only 25% of the participants had some prior working knowledge of MM, most participants were able to report concrete learning points (85%), while 60% of participants were able to provide a convincing statement about their future use of MM.

Participants stated what they found helpful about the workshop as follows:

- *The explanation of how to use the quantitative and qualitative combined together. The workshop allowed interaction which we share our ideas and that we gained important information.*

- *The debates, discussions and clarifications of various MM concepts.*

- *The real essence or purpose of mixed method research and a clearer meaning of the mixed method research.*

- *The high level of engagement and exposure to various cases. The measured way in which mixed methods research design was unpacked.*

- *I have gained a lot with regards to research in general but specifically in mixed methods. The workshop was also effective with regards to providing a conducive space to conceptualise research projects, which could potentially use mixed methods design.*

- *Although the workshop focused on mixed methods I believe this workshop assisted me to have a better understanding on several other concepts in research.*

- Workshop participants provided constructive feedback. Most participants found the workshop well-paced and well-structured. There were some suggestions to allow *"more time to work on personal research projects"*, to enable *"more presentations from the groups to share their view with the rest of the class"*, but also *"shorter discussion sessions"*. Overall, we are satisfied that the workshop was organised well, and supported the professional development of the participants.

The *Teachers Upfront* seminar series, is an ongoing collaboration between UJ, the Bridge foundation, Wits and Sci-Bono that has extended over a number of years. The seminar session, organised by Dr Jacqueline

Batchelor, once again attracted a dedicated and vocal audience. A very successful seminar was held in March during which our international panel of speakers focused on *Open Educational Resources (OERs) as a teacher-development tool*. Currently there are several OER repositories available for South African teachers to access and use. However, these resources are underutilised in terms of teachers changing their classroom practice and teaching philosophy. In this seminar we explored what attracts teachers to use OERs and also the barriers that inhibit optimal use.

The following questions were considered by our three speakers:

Dr Björn Haßler - University of Cambridge.

- *What are the elements that need to go into the design of OERs that enable them to have the potential for teacher professional development? (Dr Björn Haßler - University of Cambridge).* During his talk, Dr Björn Haßler highlighted the need for teacher professional development to promote pupils' learning, school-based active teacher learning, and wider factors (programme scheduling, fidelity and scaffolding, facilitator support), as well as the role of Open Educational Resources to achieve sustaining and scaling of programmes. He argued that effective teacher education is a shared problem that requires shared action.

- *What is it about OERs that make a collection sustainable in terms of use, and enhancement of learning design? (Dr Ephraim Mhlanga, Programme Specialist: Quality Assurance - SAIDE).* This talk deliberated aspects of context and relevancy in the development of OERs and reflected on principles of good learning design. He made the case for broadening teachers' understanding of various pedagogical practices during their professional development instances to better understand the practicalities of using and repurposing OERs in the classroom.

Dr Ephraim Mhlanga, Programme Specialist: Quality Assurance - SAIDE.

teachers UPFRONT

Prof Carmel McNaught – Distiwnguished Visiting Professor, University of Johannesburg.

- *How can teachers find OERs of quality? What are the possibilities for teacher input in the evaluation of OERs so that a Community of Practice can form? (Prof Carmel McNaught – Distinguished Visiting Professor, University of Johannesburg).* Prof McNaught considered the various reasons why teachers seek out OERs and highlighted successful OER repositories that have a clear direction and focus, a core of committed promoters with sustained enthusiasm, facilitating the easy addition of resources, consulting their user community(ies) and having suitable granularity in searching.

The seminar was well attended with active audience participation. Each presentation was followed by an active discussion, including contributions for pre-service teachers. The seminar was well attended and concluded the three-series seminars that focussed on various aspects related to ICT in the classroom.

Profiting from the Poor: The Emergence of Multinational Edu-Businesses in India

Carol Anne Spreen, PhD, New York University

Visiting Professor, Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, UJ

A new Education International report on school privatisation in India reveals the plans of global edu-businesses to invest in, grow, and profit from education for the poor. With 68,7 per cent of the population earning below US$2 a day and 41,6 per cent of population earning below US$1.25 a day, the push toward private schools for the poor is a matter of serious concern. The commercialisation of education is in flagrant violation of India's Right to Education Act, and will deepen inequality and undermine an already ailing education system.

The report *Profiting from the Poor: The Emergence of Multinational Edu-businesses in Hyderabad, India*, co-authored by Kamat S., Spreen C.A. and Jonnalagadda I., shows that private schooling has grown significantly. Enrolment in private schools is now over 80 per cent in Hyderabad alone. The city has become a laboratory for global edu-businesses such as Pearson PLC, in alliance with international investors and private equity firms, to test new models of private provision and tech solutions on students from low-income homes. While there are many types of private schools, it is the 'low-fee' private schools, that are of primary interest to multinational investors. There are an estimated 1 300 such schools clustered in and around the Old City in Hyderabad.

The recent Memorandum of Understanding between the government of AP and Bridge International Academies, to run the state's primary and early childhood education, is an ominous sign of things to come. Supported by Pearson, billionaires Gates and Zuckerberg, DFID-UK and the World Bank, the international chain has come under heavy criticism in Uganda and Kenya for its scripted curriculum and dependence on untrained teachers.

The presence of an information technology industry is an essential part of the business model being pursued. Replicating a 'start-up' business model, edu-businesses appear, intent to test and incubate new products and services and develop new models of for-profit schools. Schools for the poor are expected to operate on a large scale with untrained and unqualified teachers who are paid subsistence wages. Pearson, along with venture capital firms, such as Gray Ghost, private foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates and Michael and Susan Dell Foundations, is promoting edu-businesses to market products and services and offering school proprietors high interest loans to scale up and start-up funds to set up franchises and create profitable business models for schools for the poor in India.
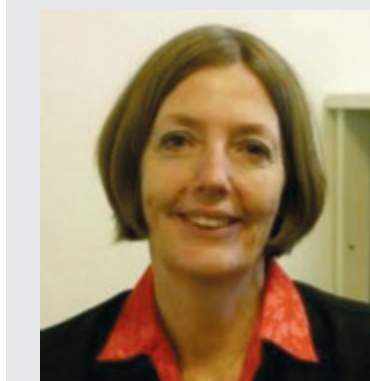
Designing for learning using learning technologies: Reflections on the changing pattern of issues and strategies across time in Australia and Hong Kong, with implications for South Africa

Prof Carmel McNaught, a visiting professor, presented a paper in May 2017 on the following topic: "Designing for learning using learning technologies: Reflections on the changing pattern of issues and strategies across time in Australia and Hong Kong, with implications for South Africa"

In this talk, Prof McNaught shared experiences of working in learning technologies in Australia from the early 1990s, and in Hong Kong for a decade in the 2000s. Using the quote "Some things change … and some things never change", she explored trends in learning design that involve learning technologies, and extracted a framework of principles and factors that may assist the choice of learning technologies in South Africa.

Prof McNaught suggested that there was a range of challenges facing the Faculty, including:

Solvable challenges: Those that we understand and know how to solve, which include the low digital fluency of Faculty and the relative lack of rewards for teaching.

Difficult challenges: Those we understand but for which solutions are elusive, including competition from new models of education and scaling teaching innovations.

Wicked challenges: Those that are complex to even define, much less address, which include expanding access to digital learning, and keeping education relevant.

In her concluding comments, Prof McNaught noted that the matter of teaching and learning in a digital age is complex. There are many things that influence learning, including:

Context matters, teacher matters, and social, cultural and political factors overlap. Funding is not everything, but it is important. Careful critique of research is necessary.

EDITORIAL

This issue of *EduBrief* is devoted to the topic of innovation in teaching and learning related to the use of digital and/or computer-based technology and learning. This field is one which is growing in significance, not just at UJ, but across the secondary and tertiary sectors of education in South Africa. As is evidenced by the articles in this edition of EduBrief, there is strong leadership in this field in the Faculty of Education at UJ. The Department of Science and Technology Education (SciTechEd) is in the forefront of driving this innovation. Dr Jacqueline Batchelor, in particular, is an academic who has made significant contributions in this process. It is clear from the articles that the success of these innovations is largely dependent on partnering with industry players as well as the Department of Basic Education. It must also be noted that the support of Prof Sarah Gravett, the Executive Dean of the Faculty, is crucial to the success of these ventures. The Faculty expresses a heartfelt thank you to the individuals and organisations involved in supporting the innovation in the teaching and learning processes mentioned in the articles in this issue. There is strong evidence that these innovations will go from strength to strength in the future.

It is not just in the local sphere that the Faculty's engagement with technology is evident. Two international researchers presented seminars on matters relating to technology and education. Prof Carol Anne Spreen, a visiting professor from New York University, and associated with CERT, addressed the topic of *Profiting from the Poor: The Emergence of Multinational Edu-businesses in Hyderabad, India*, and considered the link between business and information technology. Prof Carmel McNaught, a visiting professor associated with SciTechEd, addressed the topic of learning technologies and curriculum issues.

It is evident that the Faculty is meeting the challenges of learning technologies and also developing significant international relations.

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